



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

July 19, 2004

S. 2543

National Heritage Partnership Act

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
on July 14, 2004*

S. 2543 would provide a framework for establishing new national heritage areas (NHAs). NHAs are cultural or historical areas managed locally in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) but are not units of the National Park System. CBO estimates that enacting S. 2543—by itself—would have no effect on the federal budget because none of the activities authorized by the bill could occur without further authorizing legislation. The bill, however, would establish a new procedure that could affect how many and how quickly new NHAs could be established using future appropriations. Enacting S. 2543 would not affect direct spending or revenues.

This legislation contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

S. 2543 would establish criteria and mechanisms for assessing, planning, designating, and developing new national heritage areas. For each proposed new NHA, Congressional action would be required to authorize both the first step, a feasibility study, and the final step, a formal NHA designation.

Under the bill, once a feasibility study of a potential NHA has been authorized by the Congress, the NPS would either conduct the study itself or allow one to be undertaken by an interested local entity. Completed and assessed studies would then be submitted to the Congress. If legislation to designate the NHA is enacted and funds are made available, the chosen local coordinating entity for the area would have three years to submit a general management plan to the Secretary of the Interior for approval.

The bill would authorize the appropriation of up to \$250,000 annually for individual feasibility studies (up to a total of \$750,000 a year). Finally, the bill would authorize the

appropriation of up to \$1 million per NHA per year (up to a total of \$15 million annually) for financial and technical assistance to local coordinating entities. Such funds (up to a 15-year total of \$10 million per NHA) would be used to develop and implement management plans and administer the area.

Because the authority to appropriate funds provided in S. 2543 would depend on subsequent acts of Congress to authorize feasibility studies and designate new NHAs, CBO estimates that enacting this legislation alone would have no effect on the federal budget.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. The estimate was reviewed by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.